

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----005503 131119Z /12

P 130914Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 335
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 719

EXDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

BANGKOK FOR DERIAN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, RP
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS: ASSISTANT SECRETARY DERIAN'S VISIT TO THE
PHILIPPINES: CONTACT WITH OPPOSITION PERSONALITIES
AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

1. SUMMARY: ASSISTANT SECRETARY DERIAN HAD A FULL SCHEDULE
OF MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS WITH GOP
OFFICIALS AND OPPOSITIONIST FIGURES DURING A ONE-AND A-HALF
DAY VISIT TO THE PHILIPPINES JANUARY 10-12. MS. DERIAN'S
FRANK DISCUSSIONS WITH MARCOS, ENRILE AND ROMULO, IN WHICH
SHE PRESSED FOR A RETURN TO DEMOCRACY IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND
THE GOP'S STRONGLY DEFENSIVE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC REACTION TO
HER VIEWS ARE REPORTED IN SEPTELS. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

HELD A NUMBER OF CORDIAL MEETINGS WITH PROMINENT POLITICAL
FIGURES IN THE OPPOSITION AND WITH OTHERS ACTIVE IN THE HUMAN
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RIGHTS AREA. THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS WERE OBVIOUSLY
PLEASED WITH THE SYMBOLIC VALUE OF MS. DERIAN'S PRESENCE
IN THE PHILIPPINES, WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO BRIEF HER ON
THEIR PERCEPTION AND ROLE, AND WITH HER EXPRESSIONS OF
USG SERIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE CONCERNING HUMAN RIGHTS.
DISCUSSIONS WERE HELD WITH TRINIDAD HERRERA AND
IMPRISONED SENATOR BENIGNO AQUINO. AQUINO EXPRESSED

DETERMINATION TO REMAIN IN DETENTION AS A SYMBOL OF SUPPRESSED OPPOSITION AND ASKED MS. DERIAN NOT TO PRESS FOR HIS RELEASE AND EXILE, AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER INTERIM PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS EXPECTED THIS SPRING. END SUMMARY.

2. SHORTLY AFTER HER ARRIVAL, MS. DERIAN WAS GUEST OF HONOR AT SMALL DINNER HOSTED BY THE DCM. FORMER PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL, FORMER SENATOR TANADA, FORMER FOREIGN SECRETARY S.P. LOPEZ, AND NUNS WORKING FOR TASK FORCE ON DETAINEES AND CATHOLIC MASS MEDIA GROUP WERE PRESENT. CONVERSATION CENTERED ON (1) EFFORTS BY COMBINED OPPOSITION AND RELIGIOUS GROUP TO OBTAIN PERMISSION TO PUBLISH MONTHLY MAGAZINE "CONFRONTATION," WHICH HAS BEEN DENIED PERMIT BY PRINT MEDIA COUNCIL; (2) CHURCH-COMPILED DATA REGARDING DETAINEES AND DISAPPEARANCES; (3) RECENT EFFORTS BY PRESIDENT AND MRS. MARCOS TO CONTACT AND CONCILIATE CHURCH ACTIVISTS THROUGH FATHER JAMES REUTER. S.P. LOPEZ OFFERED A TOAST WELCOMING MS. DERIAN, SAYING THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES IN THE PHILIPPINES WERE INEFFECTIVE IN OPPOSING "OUR ONE-MAN GOVERNMENT" AND NEEDED THE HELP OF THE USG; HE LOOKED FORWARD TO INCREASING U.S. MORAL SUPPORT REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES. MACAPAGAL URGED MS. DERIAN NOT TO LUMP THE PHILIPPINES WITH IRAN AND SOUTH KOREA, SINCE PHILIPPINES DOES NOT HAVE LONG TRADITION OF DICTATORSHIP.

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3. MS. DERIAN ALSO MET WITH HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS AND OPPOSITIONIST POLITICIANS THE FOLLOWING DAY AT BREAKFAST HOSTED BY SENATOR SALONGA. SALONGA HAD INVITED SENATOR AQUINO'S WIFE AND TRINIDAD HERRERA (SLUM LEADER WHO WAS ALLEGEDLY TORTURED IN 1977), AS WELL AS SENATORS RODRIGO, TANADA, ROXAS AND KALAW AND PROTESTANT PASTOR RIGOS. MS. DERIAN TALKED PERSONALLY WITH MRS. HERRERA BEFORE BREAKFAST AND WITH MRS. AQUINO AND SALONGA ABOUT THE AQUINO CASE OVER BREAKFAST. TANADA AND RODRIGO DESCRIBED DEVELOPMENT OF OPPOSITION STRATEGY IN UPCOMING ELECTIONS FOR INTERIM PARLIAMENT. PASTOR RIGOS, WHO IS ACTIVE IN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION, WAS PERSUADED TO WITHDRAW CLU STATEMENT ACCUSING U.S. OF INSINCERITY ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIS-A-VIS MILITARY BASES ISSUE. SENATOR KALAW ASKED ABOUT U.S. STRATEGY ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN UNITED NATIONS CONTEXT; MS. DERIAN REPLIED THAT U.S. HAS STRONGLY SUPPORTED THE CREATION OF POWERFUL HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.

4. FOLLOWING MEETINGS WITH GOP OFFICIALS (SEPTTEL), MS. DERIAN CALLED ON JAIME CARDINAL SIN, ARCHBISHOP OF

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----005607 131142Z /11

P 130914Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 336
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANILA 719

EXDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

BANGKOK FOR DERIAN

MANILA. CARDINAL SIN, WHO OCCUPIES MIDDLE GROUND BETWEEN CHURCH ACTIVISTS AND CONSERVATIVES, EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL DISLIKE FOR MARTIAL LAW. HOWEVER, HE SAID, HIS PERSONAL DISLIKE FOR MARTIAL LAW. HOWEVER, HE SAID, HE FELT HE SHOULD NOT COMMIT HIMSELF TO OPPOSITION AND SHOULD PRAISE GOP WHERE PRAISE WAS DUE. HE SAID HE SEEMS TO BE THE ONLY PERSON ABLE TO REPRESENT ORDINARY CITIZENS MISTREATED BY THE GOVERNMENT, AND HE SPENDS MUCH OF HIS TIME TRYING TO RESOLVE THESE GRIEVANCES. HE SAID THAT HIS OFFICE PUBLISHES A BI-WEEKLY NEWSLETTER WHICH WILL SOON BECOME WEEKLY. IT REPRINTS FULL TEXT OF THE CARDINAL'S SPEECHES WHICH RE CRITICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THEREFORE ARE NOT REPORTED IN THE MASS MEDIA, HE SAID. CARDINAL SIN ALSO SAID THAT HE HAD VOTED IN THE DECEMBER 17 REFERENDUM "AS A CIVIC DUTY," BUT HE HAD VOTED "NO" AND HAD SIGNED

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HIS NAME TO THE BALLOT. HE SAID HE USED A FOUNTAIN PEN,

RATHER THAN THE PENCIL PROVIDED, SO THAT HIS BALLOT WOULD NOT BE ALTERED.

5. MEETING WITH IMPRISONED SENATOR BENIGNO AQUINO, JR. WAS HASTILY ARRANGED EVENING OF JANUARY 11. MEETING HAD BEEN APPROVED ORALLY BY PRESIDENT MARCOS EARLIER IN THE DAY. MEETING TOOK PLACE IN SMALL INTERVIEW ROOM INSIDE MILITARY STOCKADE AT

FORT BONIFACIO. BGEN RAMAS, IN CHARGE OF MILITARY SECURITY UNIT, GREETED MS. DERIAN AND INTRODUCED AQUINO. MILITARY PHOTOGRAPHER TOOK SEVERAL PHOTOS OF OCCASION, BUT ALL FILIPINOS WITHDREW WHEN REQUESTED. MEETING LASTED 90 MINUTES, MOST OF WHICH WAS ELOQUENT MONOLOGUE BY AQUINO. (HIS WIFE HAD ALERTED HIM AFTER BREAKFAST THAT MS. DERIAN HOPED TO MEET HIM).

6. AQUINO BEGAN BY RELATING HIS CONVERSATION LAST JUNE WITH PRESIDENT MARCOS -- THEIR FIRST SINCE HIM IMPRISONMENT. HE SAID MARCOS ON FOUR OCCASIONS STEERED CONVERSATION TO GIVE AQUINO OPPORTUNITY TO REQUEST A COMPROMISE, BUT AQUINO DID NOT RISE TO BAIT. AT ONE POINT, HE SAID, MARCOS SAID, "OF COURSE YOU WOULD NOT ACCEPT AMNESTY, MUCH LESS A PARDON, WOULD YOU?" AQUINO SAID HE REFUSED ON GROUNDS HE WISHES TO CLEAR HIS NAME COMPLETELY, AND AMNESTY OR PARDON REQUIRE PRIOR ADMISSION OF GUILT.

7. AQUINO SAID HE FEELS HE IS "THE ONLY PRESSURE POINT LEFT" AGAINST MARCOS AND AS SUCH HAS BEEN ABLE TO BRING ABOUT SEVERAL CHANGES WHICH IMPROVE LEGAL PROCEDURES AND HUMAN RIGHTS CLIMATE UNDER MARTIAL LAW. HE SAID HE HAS COMMITTED HIMSELF TO BE A RALLYING POINT FOR THE OPPOSITION BY REMAINING IN JAIL. HE WAS PUT IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT
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IN A RURAL AREA IN 1973, HE SAID, AND NEARLY REACHED THE BREAKING POINT AT THAT TIME. HOWEVER, HE HAS NOW GONE THROUGH " THE THREE NECESSARY STAGES OF SHOCK, RE-AWAKENING, AND COMMITMENT." HE WROTE A 100-PAGE DOCUMENT EXPLAINING HIS COMMITMENT, BUT HE IS SURE THAT MARCOS KNOWS WHAT IS IN THIS DOCUMENT AND WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO PREVENT IT FROM BEING MADE PUBLIC. THIS, HE SAID, IS WHY HE WAS NOT PERMITTED TO MAKE A FINAL STATEMENT ON NOVEMBER 25, WHEN HE WAS SENTENCED TO DEATH. THE DOCUMENT CONTAINS DETAILS OF THE ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH BY THE MARCOS FAMILY AND ITS CRONIES, WHICH HE OUTLINED TO MS. DERIAN.

8. AQUINO SAID HE WANTS THE OPPOSITION TO ENTER THE 1978 INTERIM PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS. HE EXPECTS THEM TO LOSE, BUT EVENTUALLY THE OPPOSITION CAN MAKE A COMEBACK THROUGH ELECTIONS. HE SAID THAT PRESIDENT MARCOS IS VERY

MUCH AWARE OF HIS SAGGING POPULARITY AND IS TAKING OPINION
POLLS WEEKLY.

9. MS. DERIAN TOLD HIM THE USG WILL CONTINUE TO APPLY
PRESSURE FOR DUE PROCESS IN AQUINO'S CASE AS IN OTHERS.
SHE ASKED WHETHER THERE WAS ANYTHING FURTHER THE USG COULD
DO FOR HIM, SUCH AS PRESSING FOR HIS EXILE IN THE UNITED
STATES. AQUINO REPLIED THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS CONSIDERABLE
LEVERAGE WITH MARCOS; THE GOP HAS A HUGE EXTERNAL DEBT
AND BADLY NEEDS U.S. ASSISTANCE; MARCOS WANTS VERY MUCH
TO BE INVITED TO MEET PRESIDENT CARTER OR HAVE HIM VISIT
MANILA; AND THE PEOPLE ARE VERY PRO-AMERICAN REGARDLESS
OF THE STANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT. MARCOS, HE SAID, NOW
WANTS A COMPROMISE TO RELIEVE THE PRESSURE ON HIM CAUSED
BY THE AQUINO CASE. HOWEVER, THE POLITICAL SITUATION IS
CHANGING VERY RAPIDLY AT PRESENT, AND THE OPPOSITION NEEDS
THE SYMBOLISM OF AQUINO'S PRESENCE IN JAIL. AQUINO THUS
URGED MS. DERIAN TO DO NOTHING REGARDING EXILE UNTIL JUNE,
AFTER THE ELECTIONS ARE COMPLETED AND THE POLITICAL
SITUATION BEGINS TO CLARIFY. AQUINO SAID THAT HE HAS
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ALWAYS WANTED A POSITION ON THE HARVARD FACULTY AND HAS
FOUND THE PRESENT OFFER VERY TEMPTING. BUT, HAVING
COME THIS FAR, HE WANTS TO WAIT A LITTLE LONGER. MRS.
DERIAN ANSWERED THAT THE OFFER WOULD CONTINUE TO BE
EXTENDED INDEFINITELY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MANILA00719
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780020-0199
Format: TEL
From: MANILA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780168/aaaacdd.tel
Line Count: 256
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8f31fce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3781259
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HUMAN RIGHTS: ASSISTANT SECRETARY DERIAN'S VISIT TO THE PHILIPPINES: CONTACT WITH OPPOSITION PERSONALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS
TAGS: SHUM, RP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8f31fce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014